

Dragonshards

The Warforged, Part Two

By Keith Baker



Warforged Childhood

A warforged emerges from the creation forge with only the most basic knowledge of the world, drawn from a template bound into the creation forge. It can speak the Common tongue, and it recognizes the humans of House Cannith as its creators and instructors. It is not born with skill at arms, or the power of magic. Yet somehow, over the course of a few short months, the trainers of House Cannith transform this newborn into an elite soldier capable of facing the undead strength of a Karrnathi zombie or the skill of a Thrane knight.

House Cannith is the House of Making, not a military powerhouse. How did it mold the warforged to produce fighters, wizards, and other classes so rarely found among the general populace?



The warforged is born a blank slate, but it possesses a voracious appetite for knowledge. Just as the mind of a human child is more flexible than that of an adult, in its first few months a warforged possesses an astonishing ability to learn and adapt. A warforged may begin with no knowledge of the battlefield. But many Cannith instructors claim that the knowledge seems to be hidden beneath the surface, just waiting to be unlocked -- that within a few months of training, a warforged soldier may outstrip the skills of his teacher. The warforged must be shown the path to walk, but after taking its first steps, a warforged often picks up speed, learning skills in mere months that a human might take years to master.

After the first few months, however, the warforged's thought patterns crystallize, fixing on the path it has chosen. At this point, it is essentially an adult: It possesses the skills it needs to perform its chosen task, and while it can still learn new skills, this takes just as much time as it would for a human or an elf.

A side effect of this focused study is that warforged tend to frame their lives around their military specialties. A warforged may have the same skills as a human warrior, but that human had a life beyond war. He has memories of his parents, his lovers, his children, of songs and stories, of tears and joy. The warforged soldier knows only war -- and now he must learn of the world that exists beyond the battlefield. More information about this soldier mindset can be found in [Races of Eberron](#).

In the last years of the war, some forgeholds sought to take maximum advantage of this early "savant stage." Since constructs have no need of sleep, the warforged could train for 24 hours each day. Some facilities would use rotating shifts of human instructors; others turned to warforged instructors, using tireless constructs to train constructs. Most of these programs produced exceptionally skilled warforged soldiers. However, some artificers claim that the products of this path were typically more independent and less reliable. Some say that the Lord of

Blades was one of these warforged instructors -- and that his most loyal followers are the students he trained at the Cannith forgehold.

Cults and Religions

Races of Eberron presents many of the most common beliefs of religious warforged. But warforged follow as many different paths as humans do, so take a look at more options to consider when creating player characters or NPCs.

The Silver Flame: The Church of the Silver Flame has much to offer the warforged. The Flame itself is not an anthropomorphic deity, and it is not supposed to have created or shaped human civilization. Instead, it can guide a warrior and empower her in the battle against evil. Warforged that fear death may take comfort in the concept of immortality through the Flame, since noble souls are said to bond with the Flame after death. Most importantly, the church is a militant order, and for the warforged soldier who feels lost without a war, the Church of the Silver Flame offers an anchor and a chance to take part in a battle that will never end -- the struggle against evil itself.

Many in the church still feel that the warforged do not have souls and are not the equals of the true servants of the Flame. However, as more warforged join the church, cardinals, ministers, and templars alike are being impressed with the dedication and good works performed by these tireless servants of the light.

One of the most prominent warforged followers of the Silver Flame is a warforged soldier named Brightspear (LG male personality warforged fighter 1/paladin 8). Built to serve Aundair in the Last War, Brightspear was rendered inert in a battle on the Eldeen border, but he was restored by a group of Silver Flame priests. Brightspear claimed to have heard the voice of the Flame while inert, calling him to serve, and he subsequently proved able to channel the power of the Flame to perform miracles. Over the past decade, he has battled undead, aberrations, and a host of other monsters; he is best known for uncovering a rakshasa assassin and killing the fiend in Aurala's court. Brightspear uses the warforged paladin substitution levels outlined in *Races of Eberron*.

The Traveler: Many know that Onatar is the sovereign lord of the forge. Far fewer know of the role of the shifty Traveler and why this trickster is a deity of artifice. Some say Onatar guides the hands of the smith, but the Traveler is the source of new ideas -- of inspiration that can lead an artificer to entirely new paths of knowledge. The danger is that one never knows where these paths will lead: What seems like a good idea may have disastrous consequences down the road. While Onatar is the official patron of House Cannith, many in the house make secret sacrifices to the Traveler. Today a growing cult among the warforged has members who believe that this mysterious deity is the true creator of the warforged. This belief has even spread among the followers of the Lord of Blades, some of whom say that the Lord of Blades is a vessel for a spark of the Traveler itself. Warforged followers of the Traveler believe that the Cannith artificers were tricked into creating the warforged and were guided by the hand of the Traveler. Their true purpose is yet to be revealed, but humanity may learn to beware the gifts of the Traveler.

The most powerful warforged advocate of the Traveler is not a cleric, but rather an artificer. Wheel (CN female personality warforged artificer 10) is an ally of the Lord of Blades, and she has used her talents to create many of his weapons. She believes that the Lord of Blades is a tool of the Traveler, but her first loyalty is to her god, and she may prove to be an unexpected ally of the party when things are at their worst. She uses the warforged artificer substitution levels from *Races of Eberron*.

The Blood of Vol: While some warforged turn to the Blood of Vol in hopes of escaping death, others join the cult

for exactly the opposite reason. Many of the followers of the Blood believe that life is a battle against the curse of death. For mortals, the only escape is undeath. But warforged are already immune to hunger, disease, age, exhaustion, and many of the other plagues of mortality. As a result, some Blood evangelists have convinced warforged soldiers that they are the perfect champions of the church -- that they will fight at the side of the vampire lords in the final battle against death itself. These warforged soldiers are often haughty and arrogant in their newfound sense of immortality.

One of most dangerous servants of Vol calls himself Thirst (NE male personality warforged scout 5/assassin 3). While not a vampire, Thirst takes pleasure in spilling the blood of the enemies of Vol.

Warforged Senses

The warforged possess the same five senses that human beings do: sight, smell, hearing, touch, and even taste. They do not perceive the world in precisely the same way as humans do, and many of these senses are fairly dull in comparison to those of creatures of flesh and blood. But a warforged can smell smoke in the air and can gauge the extent of an injury by the pain that it feels. Many warforged value the magical component known as the *tracker mask* because it expands their sense of smell, allowing them to experience the world in a new way. But a warforged can still smell strong odors without the mask.

The warforged sense of taste is one of the mysteries of the race. It has little value to a soldier and creature that has no need of food. In fact, this is not something that was designed by the artificers of House Cannith. Warforged are not automatons, and not every aspect of the warforged is the result of human planning: They are creatures of magic that defy natural law. A warforged is a creature of stone and wood, yet it can feel love and hate. Is it any stranger that it should be able to smell and taste?

About the Author

Keith Baker has been an avid fan of **Dungeons & Dragons** since grade school. His life took a dramatic turn in 2002 when he submitted the world of Eberron to the Wizards of the Coast Fantasy Setting Search. In addition to developing the **Eberron** Campaign Setting and *Shadows of the Last War*, he has worked for Atlas Games, Goodman Games, and Green Ronin.

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